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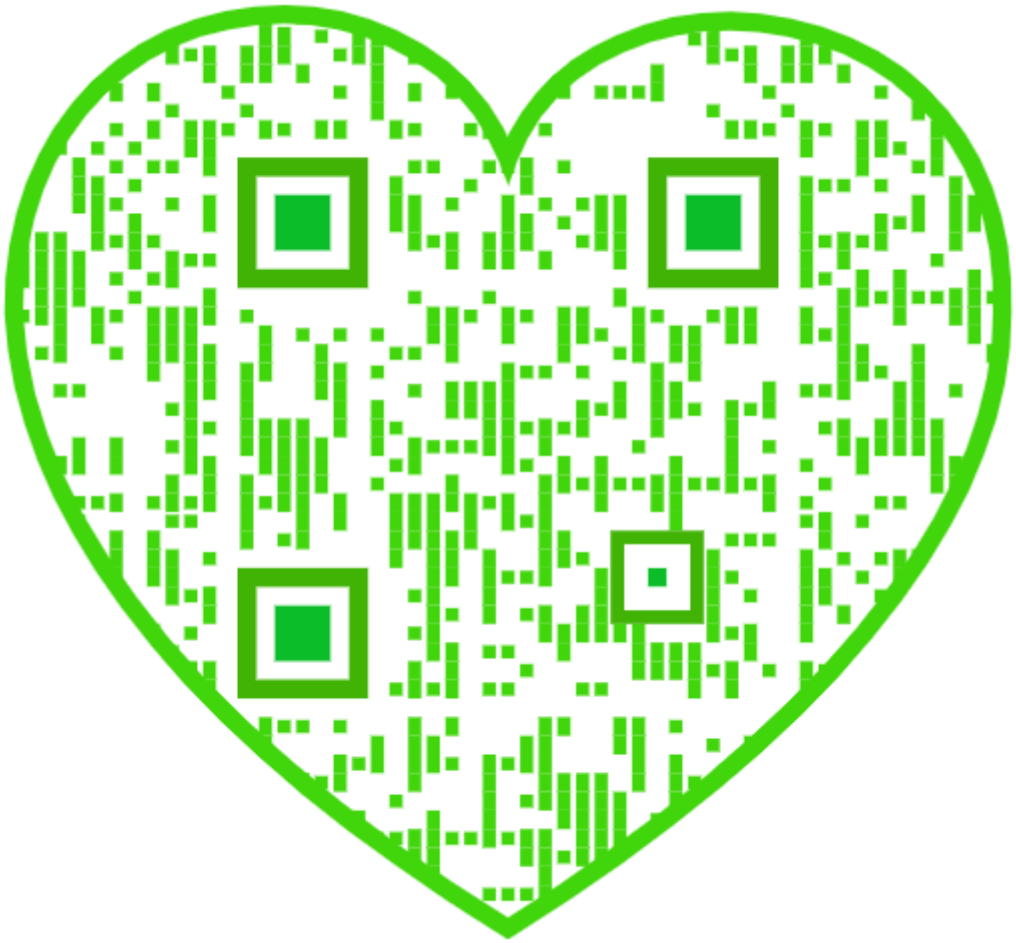


8-34479

A SHORT TREATISE

ON

BOOTS AND SHOES

ANCIENT AND MODERN,

BY

Walter A. Goater.

Presented by

J. & J. Slater,

1185 Broadway,

N. W. Cor. of 28th Street. New York.

Boots and Shoes, Ancient and Modern.

AS far back as we can trace the early history of man, under civilized conditions of life, we find that shoes of some kind have been worn.

At first they were very crude and simple, being nothing more than soles fastened to the foot by means of thongs or straps, which passed between the toes and around the ankle, like Figs. 1, 2, 3. Shoes of this description were called sandals, and were worn by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.

It has been discovered, by means of paintings on the walls of Thebes, that shoemaking formed a distinct and quite lucrative trade away back in the reign of Thothmes III., some fifteen hundred years before Christ, so that followers of the awl and last can truthfully boast of the great antiquity of their profession.

The material chiefly employed in the manufacture of shoes, from the earliest times to the present, has been leather, though stuffs of various kinds and colors have entered into their composition at different periods.

The sandals worn by the priests of ancient Egypt were generally made of palm and papyrus leaves fastened together. Some well-preserved specimens of these sandals, obtained from tombs, can now be seen at the British Museum, in London.

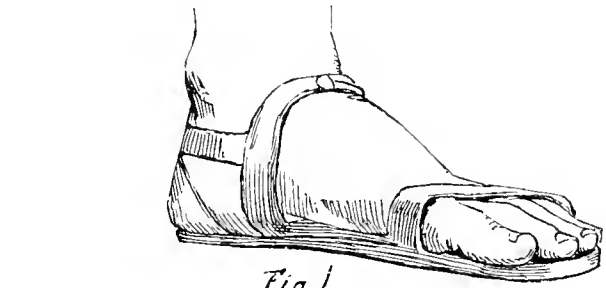


Fig. 1.

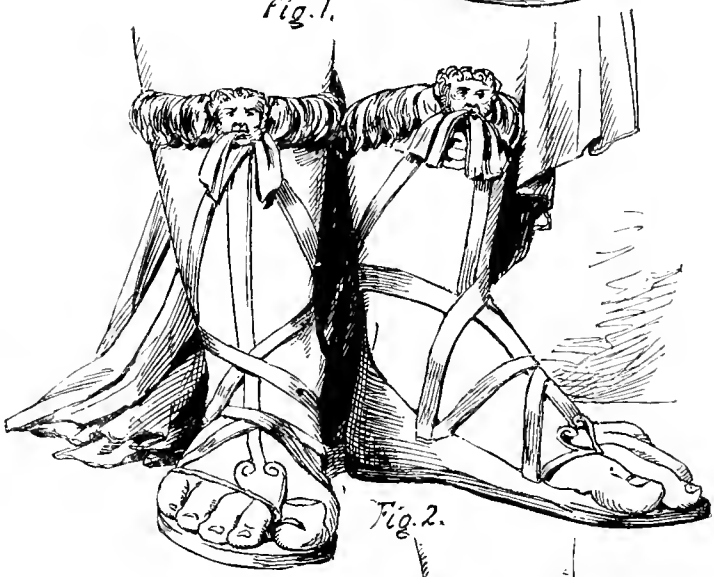


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Such were the shoes probably worn by Rhodope, the Cinderella of the Nile. Rhodope was said to have the loveliest foot in all Egypt. One day, as she was taking her bath, an eagle stooped from Heaven and carried off her sandal. She watched him as he soared on high, until he finally disappeared in the distance.

When, after a time, he let the sandal drop, it fell at the feet of the King, who was so charmed with its beauty that he commanded that a search be made immediately for its owner. Rhodope was soon discovered, and shortly afterwards became the Queen of Egypt.

In both ancient Greece and Rome we find that, while it was common for the women to wear some kind of a foot covering, shoes were not generally worn by the men or youth, the latter always being taught to go barefooted. But later on, on ceremonial occasions, the magistrates began to wear a red shoe, while the soldiers took to a boot reaching almost to the knee, very elaborate in design, and in a short time the custom of wearing a covering for the feet was adopted by all classes. The shoes of the women were always white in color, the senators black, while the magistrates kept to themselves red.

In eastern countries we find the Japanese wearing a

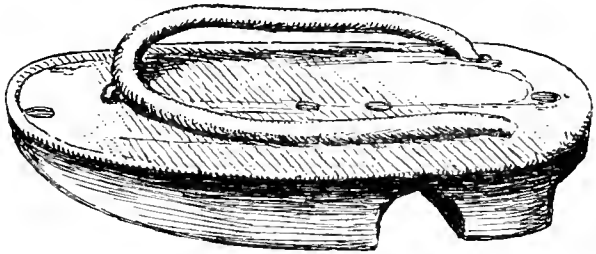


Fig 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

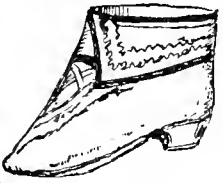


Fig. 7.

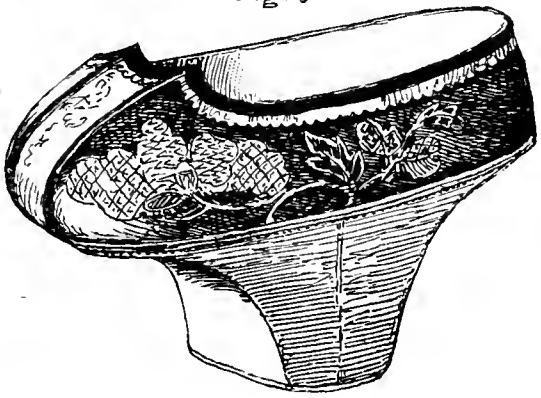


Fig. 8.

shoe of rice and straw woven together (Fig. 5). This material is very light and soon wears out; so, when starting on a journey of any length, it is customary to take a number of pairs of shoes with one, leaving the old ones along the roadside as they become unfit for use.

The Japanese, on entering a house, observe the same rule as the Turk on going into his mosque, always taking off their shoes and leaving them at the threshold, lest they might soil the door-mats, for which they have a peculiar and marked respect. The military in Japan wear a kind of clog, covered with movable metallic plaques (Fig. 4). To this is attached a sole of wood or plaited straw, which is held on the foot by means of a roll passing between the toes.

The Chinese, we all know, have, for ages past, religiously devoted themselves to dwarfing the feet of their women of the higher classes, so that it is not at all uncommon to find a full-grown woman with a foot as small as a child's of four or five with us.

Of late years this barbarous custom has been gradually dying out, and now one can occasionally come across a woman whose feet have not been distorted; still, when they are allowed to wear shoes of natural size and form, they are usually fixed on high, conical soles, like Figure 8, which renders walking very difficult. But the Chinese women are not expected to walk much, as their lives are passed in seclusion and retirement.

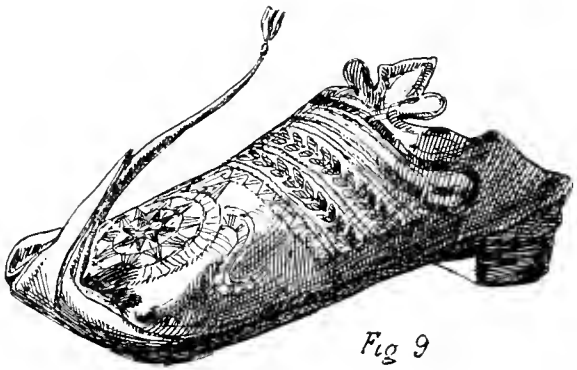


Fig 9

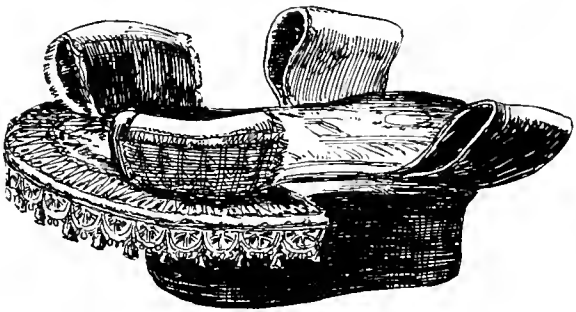


Fig 10

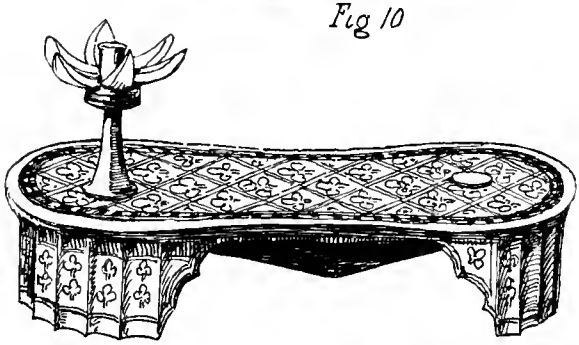


Fig 11

Some of the shoes worn by the ladies are very beautiful, indeed (Figs. 6 & 7), being made of delicate pink and blue satin embroidered with birds and flowers.

The men generally wear black satin boots with white soles, which they lay off in summer for shoes made of plaited bamboo, with cork soles.

In India, shoes are worn only by the higher classes, and a few of the lower castes. This habit of going shoeless seems to render the toes of the Hindoo almost as lissom as fingers. Sitting at his work, if his hands are employed he can use his feet to pick up any article he may require, as the big toe becomes quite prehensile.

Among the Persians we find that in ancient times one of low stature was generally looked upon with dishonor; hence arose high heels to repair the deficiency of nature. At first they were worn only by actors and actresses on the stage, but were afterwards adopted by all classes, even those whose stature required no additional height blindly conforming to the prevailing fashion, as many people do at the present day.

Some of the shoes worn in Eastern countries, at different times, have been very interesting (Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14).

Figure 11 shows a lady's shoe richly painted with small flowers. In front is a knob of brilliant color, divided into segments to imitate the petals of a flower, and at every step the wearer takes she presses a spring

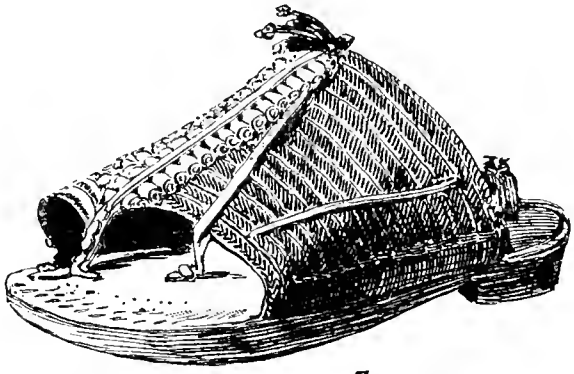


Fig. 12.

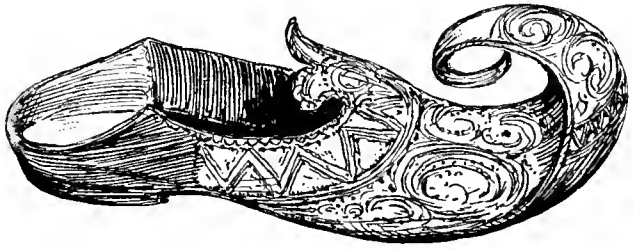


Fig 13

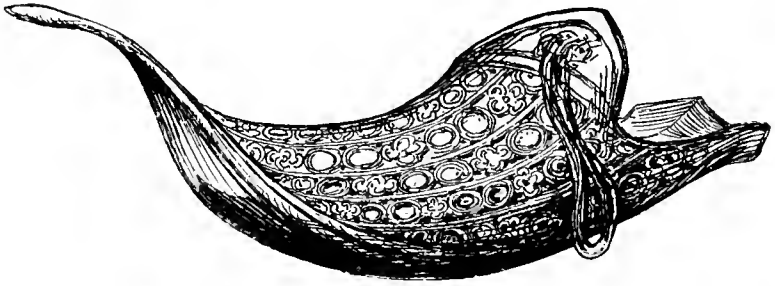


Fig. 14.

concealed under the sole, which causes the petals to alternately open and close. One can easily imagine the sensation such a shoe would cause, seen promenading along any of our prominent thoroughfares for the first time.

The shoes worn by the wealthy are of the richest description, being overlaid with gold and silver, and embroidered with precious stones. Others, like Figure 14, are adorned with inlaid work of pearls or delicate shells set in gold, closely resembling *cloissonne* enamel, while many employ the wings of gorgeous insects in their decoration.

The color of shoes in the East seems to be a matter of importance, indicating the rank or caste of the wearer, red and yellow being the favorite shades.

In olden times the Mohammedans were very jealous that none should wear yellow but themselves, wishing it to be preserved as their distinctive mark; and there is an old story which tells how some charitable person gave a Christian beggar an old pair of yellow slippers, and the Sultan happening to see them had the old man thrown into prison, and despite his explanations and protestations of innocence would not spare his life.

Leaving the East, and coming back to Europe, we find that in the early days of the Church at Rome there

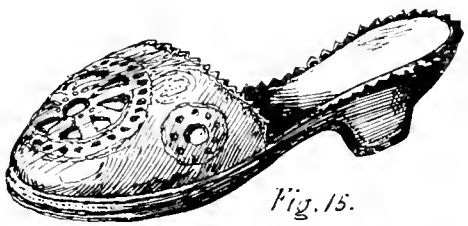


Fig. 15.

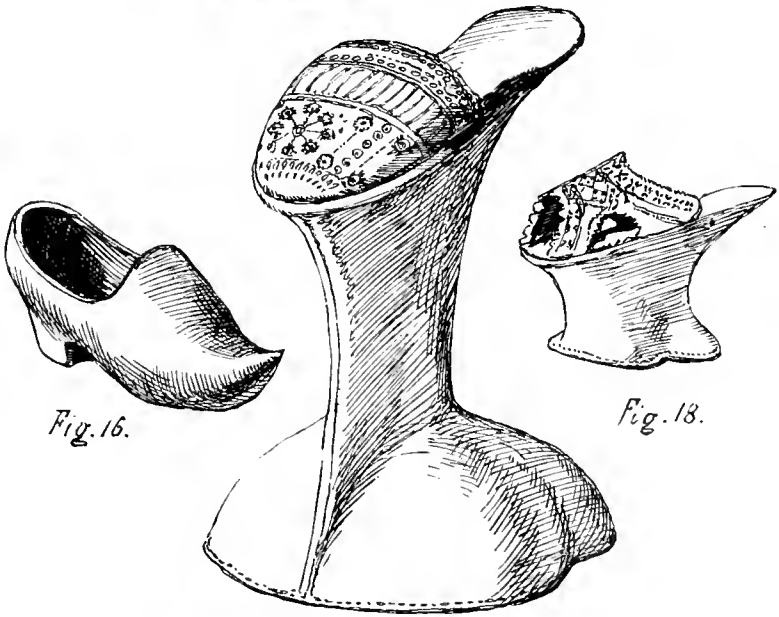


Fig. 16.

Fig. 18.

Fig. 17.

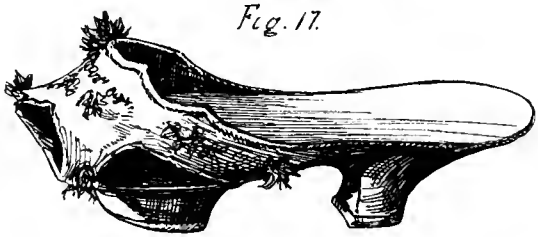


Fig. 19.

lived a pious man named Crispin, and his brother, who became converted to Christianity, and leaving their native village traveled into France and Britain.

While on their travels they supported themselves by making shoes, which they sold to the poor at very low prices.

(There is a legend which says that an angel supplied them with all the leather, which probably accounts for their moderate charges.) At any rate, they are said to have done a great deal of good among the poor, but were finally martyred for their faith, in the third century. Ever since their memory has been celebrated by the faithful of their craft with great rejoicing and merriment on the 25th of October, which is known as St. Crispin's Day, while he is considered the patron saint of all shoemakers.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, we find the use of wooden shoes, or *sabots*, very general throughout Europe, princes of all degrees wearing them. Their reign was of short duration, however, as they were soon relegated to the poorer classes, by whom they have been worn ever since.

One would think, from their clumsy appearance (Fig. 16), that it must be rather awkward work to walk in them, but the peasants do not seem to find it so, and

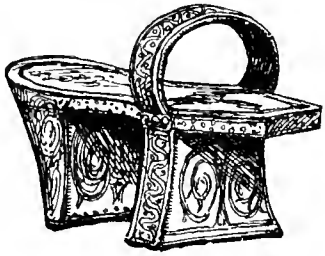


Fig. 20.

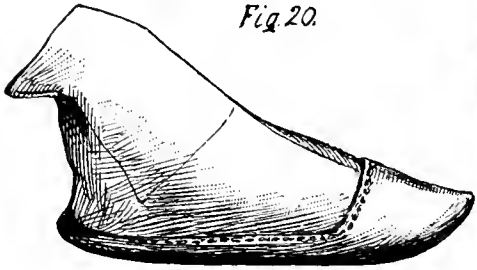


Fig. 21.

Fig. 22.

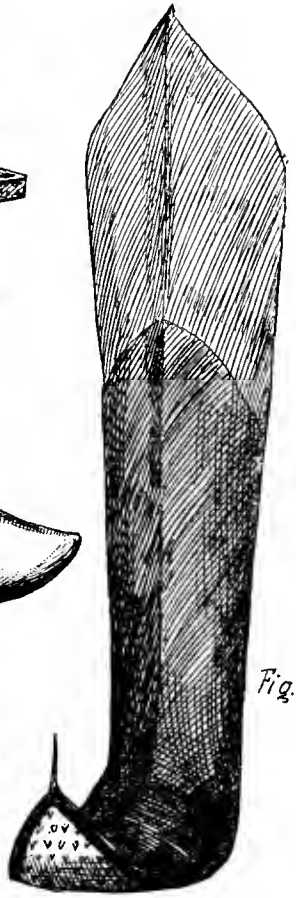


Fig. 23.

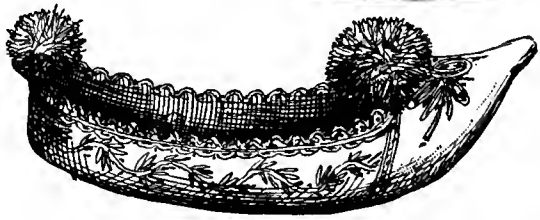


Fig. 24.

even indulge in the "light fantastic" with considerable grace and freedom of motion.

Their chief objection, however, is the noise they make. Having lived for some time in the close vicinity of a public school in Brittany, where some one or two hundred children were in daily attendance, wearing these wooden sabots, I have a very distinct recollection of the din and clatter these little ones would make, as they raced each other down the hill on their release from school. Not many years ago an attempt was made to introduce wooden shoes into the United States, but it met with so little success that its projectors were forced to abandon the scheme.

In Venice we find that the custom in olden times was to have the shoes of the women mounted very high, so as to make walking as difficult as possible. By this means jealous husbands thought they would be able to keep their wives at home; but the plan did not succeed very well, I believe.

Figs. 17 and 18 show the Venetian shoes of this period, the sixteenth century. The first one, of white leather, is cut out in a delicate lace-work pattern, furnished with a broad sole, and would have been comfortable enough, were it not for its high support.

These supports, or *chapineys*, as they were called by

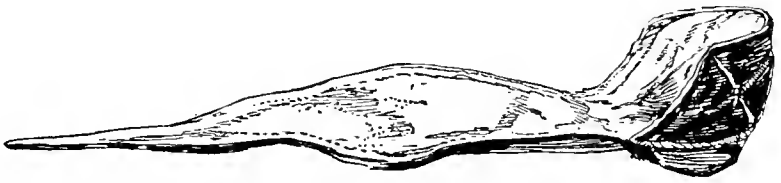
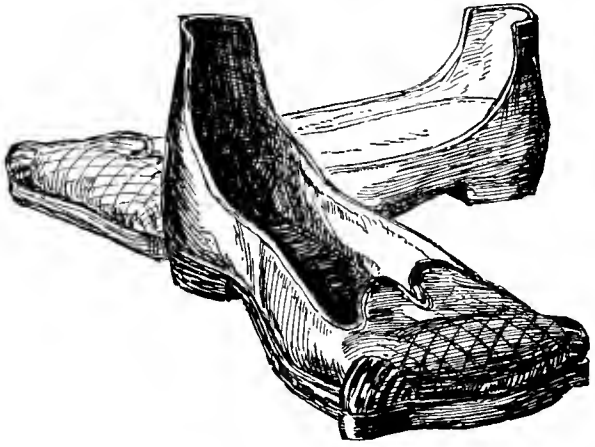


Fig 25.



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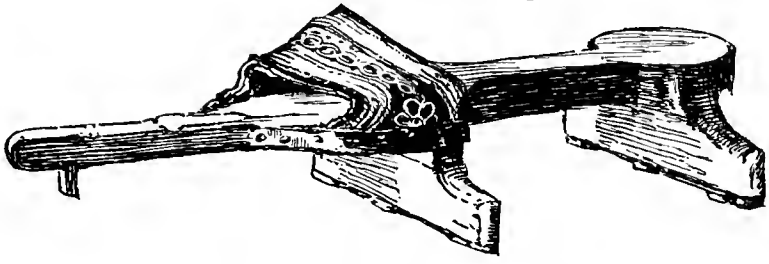

Fig. 27.

the Venetians, were made of wood and covered with leather of different colors. Many were curiously painted, while the richest were of gilt. The height of these *chapineys* was determined by the rank of the wearer, the noblest ladies often having them one-half yard or more high. Of course no woman could walk easily, hampered with such appendages, so all that could at all afford it would have one or two attendants to support them on either side when they walked abroad ; and even thus supported, walking was extremely difficult.

Finally, the daughters of one of the Doges came to the conclusion that the fashion was abominable, and they would stand it no longer. It was not long before their suffering sisters became of the same mind, and the fashion gradually died out.

When Charles I. first met his future wife at Dover, he seemed surprised to find her so tall, and, having made some remark to that effect, she answered him as follows : " Sire, I stand upon my own feet. I have no help of art. Thus high I am ; I am neither higher or lower," wishing him to understand, it seems, that her fine stature was not due to artificial means.

Fig. 15 represents a highly ornamented clog of this period, while Figure 19 shows another style of Venetian pattern.

On page 13 we have two shoes from Africa, Figs. 21 and 22. The first, of yellow leather, is quite simple in

Fig. 28.

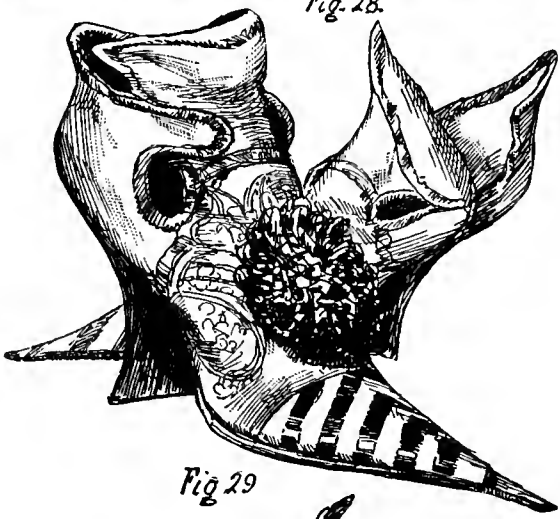

Fig 29

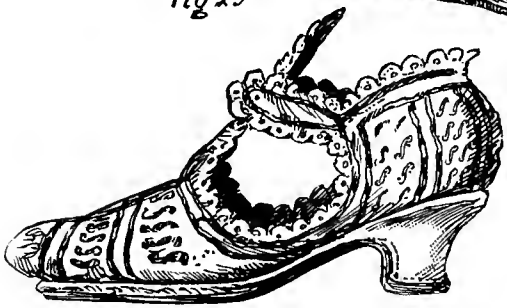

Fig. 30.

design, but the latter is more elaborate in decoration. Fig. 24 shows an Indian shoe, while Fig. 23 is a Persian boot, whose pointed front is supposed to have been designed for the purpose of preventing the wearer from kicking up the dust, so unpleasant in hot countries.

In France the clothing of the foot has always been a subject of special consideration, and many have been the styles that have emanated from there. Among the first was the long pointed shoe, called the *poulaine* (Fig. 25), in England named *crakowes*. (This name, *poulaine*, seems to indicate that the fashion came from Poland, though the pointed shoe is supposed to be of Eastern origin.) These shoes grew both in favor and length, for a number of years, until the *poulaine* had reached such proportions that it was necessary to fasten it to the knee by means of a chain of gold or silver, while in order to keep it in shape it had to be stuffed with hay, straw, or fine moss. The length of the *poulaine* was determined in the same manner as the height of the *chapineys*, by the rank of the wearer, and it was no uncommon sight to find a nobleman with his *poulaine* some twelve inches or more in extent, while the upper part of his shoes would be cut out to imitate the windows of a church.

When the crusading army was before Nicopolis, these

Fig 31

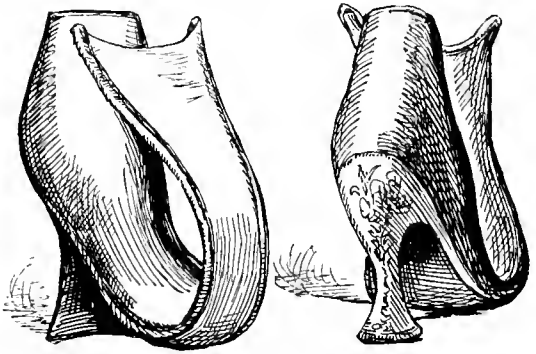

Fig. 32.

Fig. 33

poulaines astonished the Turks very much, who probably wondered how fighting was to be done in them. When it came to decisive action, however, it was found that the *poulaines* impeded the movements of the knights so much that an order was given to cut them off.

There was also made, at this time, in order to avoid trailing the *poulaines* in the mud of the narrow streets, a kind of wooden clog (Fig. 27), with cross-bars edged with iron; this was fastened to the foot by an embroidered leather strap. By means of this contrivance the *poulaines* were kept from contact with the ground.

This fashion flourished for a long time despite the anathemas of the bishops, who stigmatized them as immoral, and the denunciations of officials.

By an act of Parliament, in 1463 shoemakers were prohibited from making, for the lower classes, shoes with points more than two inches long; and afterwards excommunication was pronounced on any person found wearing them; so they were forced to retire, after a vigorous reign of almost three centuries.

From the *poulaine*, fashion ran into the opposite extreme, and in the sixteenth century people wore shoes with square toes as broad, and sometimes broader, than they were long (Fig. 26). They had no straps, and were only held on the foot by the narrow piece rising above the heel. It was shoes of this kind that were worn by Francis I. of France, and Henry VIII. of England.

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Fig. 36.

In the latter country they were abolished during the reign of Mary Tudor. The examples given are believed to be German, and must have belonged to a person of high rank, from their decoration.

Another early example of a French shoe is Fig. 29. It is of white stuff ornamented on the instep with a large rosette of silver lace and a long metal point. The heel is so high that the wearer must have literally walked on her toes. Another female shoe of interest is from the wardrobe of Catherine de Medicis, Fig. 28. The shoe, of white leather, no longer has the toe pointed but is square in shape, covered to the instep with silk, on which are worked figures in silver lace, giving to it the appearance of a metal surface. This shoe is peculiar, in having a sole which connects the toe and heel together in the form of a pattern.

Fig 30 shows a shoe of this period, of delicate workmanship. The toe has now become quite round, while the leather is slashed to show the stocking underneath.

Fig. 31 represents an Italian shoe of the seventeenth century; Fig. 33 is another style of the peaked shoe, of the same date. Fig. 32 is thought to be Flemish in origin, and of the eighteenth century. The heel and back are not unlike in shape the shoe worn during the Regency in France, but the peculiar front-piece makes us think that this shoe could never have been very popular for every-day wear.

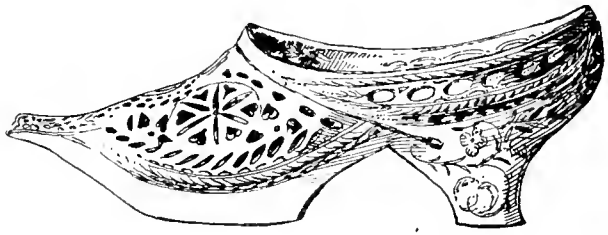

Fig 37.

Fig 38.

Fig. 39.

During the Revolution in France, there was quite a mania for classic styles in shoes, and many ladies in high society adopted the Greek and Roman sandals, which were fastened on the foot by gay-colored ribbons. Mme. Tallien once appeared at a ball in such sandals, with her toes decorated with diamond rings.

Fig. 34 shows the shoe of the unfortunate Duke de Montmorency, a victim of the relentless animosity of Richelieu. It is of black leather, with a large red heel, and entirely covered with ornaments; tradition says it was gathered on the scaffold. Fig. 35 represents a highly ornamented lady's shoe of this period, while Fig. 36 is a shoe worn during the Regency. The heel is very high and not unlike a barber's wig-stand; the front, however, is rather graceful in shape.

Figs. 37 and 38 are samples of the curiously carved wooden shoes which were worn by ladies at the end of the sixteenth century. Fig. 39 represents a black leather shoe of Louis XIV., with red heel; these were in high favor at court at this time.

The use of boots marks a conquering race. In Germany, during the Middle Ages, serfs were forbidden to wear them; and this probably explains why, when they rose for justice, after ages of oppression, they chose for their standard a great peasant's shoe. The samples of

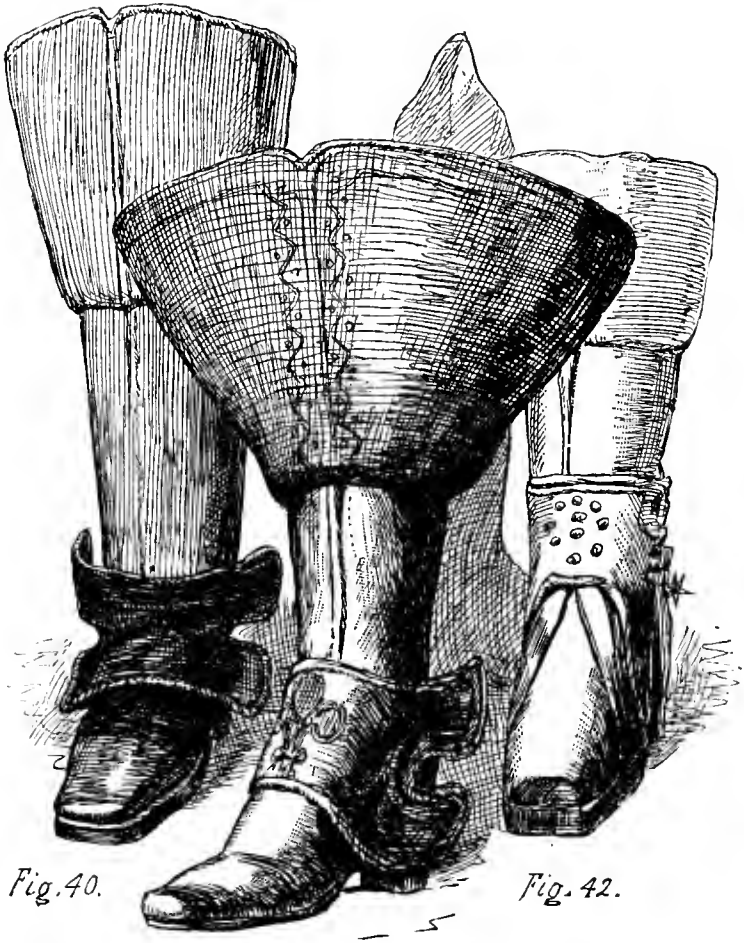

Fig. 40. Fig. 42.

Fig 41.

boots given are from the time of Louis XIV. and XV. Fig. 40 was called the cauldron boot; this had a peculiar appendage around the ankle. Fig. 41, the bellows boot, has an enormous top, so that a man could hardly wear a pair without straddling. Fig 42, the postillion's boot; these were generally made of very heavy material, so if the postillion, by chance, should fall from his horse, the wheels of the carriage might pass over his legs without doing him any injury.

We have now followed the various changes that shoes have undergone from the earliest times to the present, and would bring our remarks to a close with a notice of some of the shoes of to-day furnished by J. & J. Slater, which, if not as fantastic in shape as some that we have treated, cannot be excelled for grace or durability.

Fig. 43 is a Ladies' Riding Boot, made of morocco and patent leather. This style is the only correct one at present, and no riding costume is complete without them.

Fig. 44 represents Ladies' Button Boot. The material employed is kid top, with patent leather foxing. This makes not only a very stylish but comfortable walking boot.

Fig. 45 shows Ladies' Toilet Slipper. It is made of Suéde kid lined with silk. This material is now the latest style for dress or toilet slippers.

Fig. 43.

Fig. 44.

Fig. 46 shows Ladies' Oxfords, made of French kid, with patent-leather tips. This is a delightful summer walking shoe, either for city or country wear.

Fig. 47 is a Gentleman's Riding Boot, the only proper boot for park riding.

Fig 48, Gentleman's Button Boot, made with kid top, calf foxing, with tips, for walking, or cloth tops and patent-leather foxing, for dress wear.

Fig. 49, Gentleman's Oxfords, or summer walking shoe; very easy and comfortable for every-day wear.

The above are but a few of the various styles introduced by them, and a visit to their establishment will convince all of the high reputation their goods have achieved in the last twenty-five years.

Shoes have not only been used for their natural purpose of covering the feet, but from remote time have played a part in many of the important actions of life. Years ago it was the custom in Ireland to elect a person to a certain office by throwing an old shoe over his head. But on one occasion an excited elector, whose place it was to throw the shoe, aimed too low, so that the shoe hit the candidate on the head, instantly killing him. After this occurrence the practice fell into disrepute.

In England it was once customary to bind contracts by the exchange of old shoes, while we are all familiar

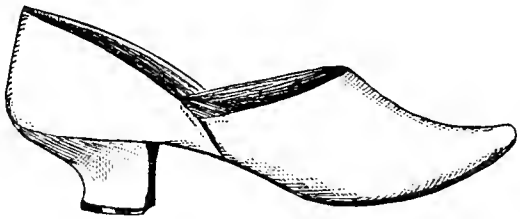

Fig. 45.

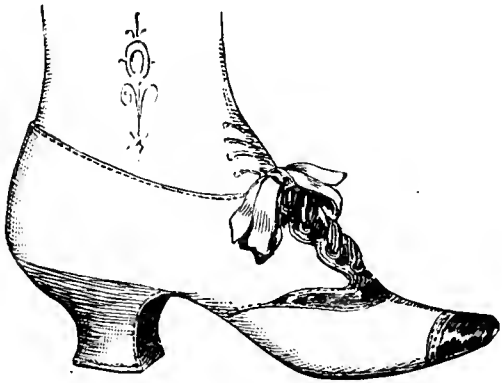

Fig. 46.

with the practice of throwing an old shoe after a bride for good luck; but I wonder how many know what it originally signified. It is a custom that has come to us from the Saxons, and with them denoted that the authority under which the bride lived while in her father's home was now delivered over to the husband, who was privileged to exact implicit obedience from his wife.

Shoes have also had their share of superstition attached to them, it being considered to portend great evil, if by chance one should put the right shoe on the left foot, or *vice versa*. Even one of the Roman Emperors is said to have run the greatest risk from just this cause alone.

"Augustus having by o'ersight,
Put on his left shoe for his right,
Had like to have been slain that day,
By soldiers mutinying for their pay."

But in this day of button shoes the dangers to be incurred from this cause are very slight.

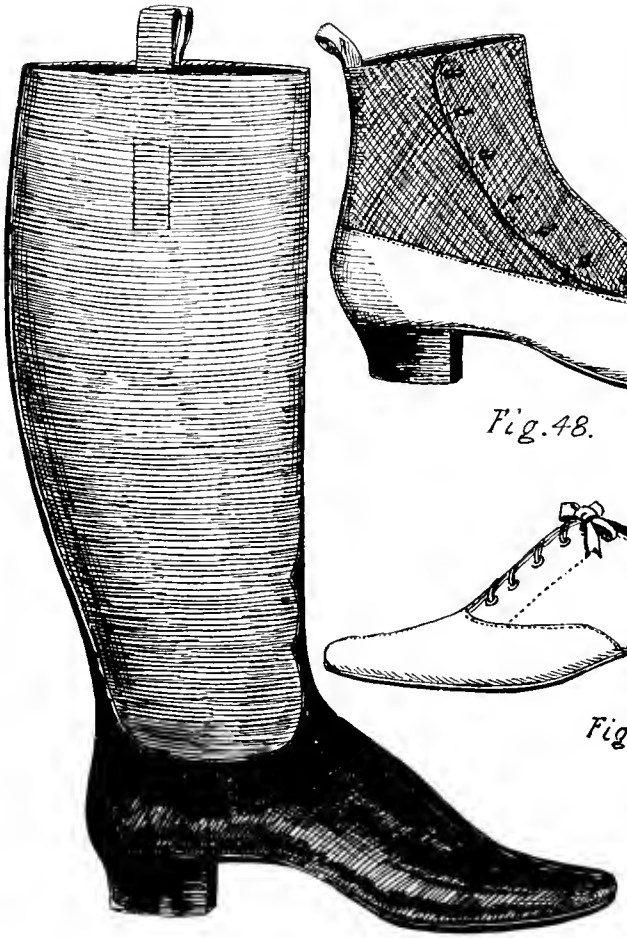

Fig. 47.

Fig. 48.

Fig 49.

J. & J. SLATER,
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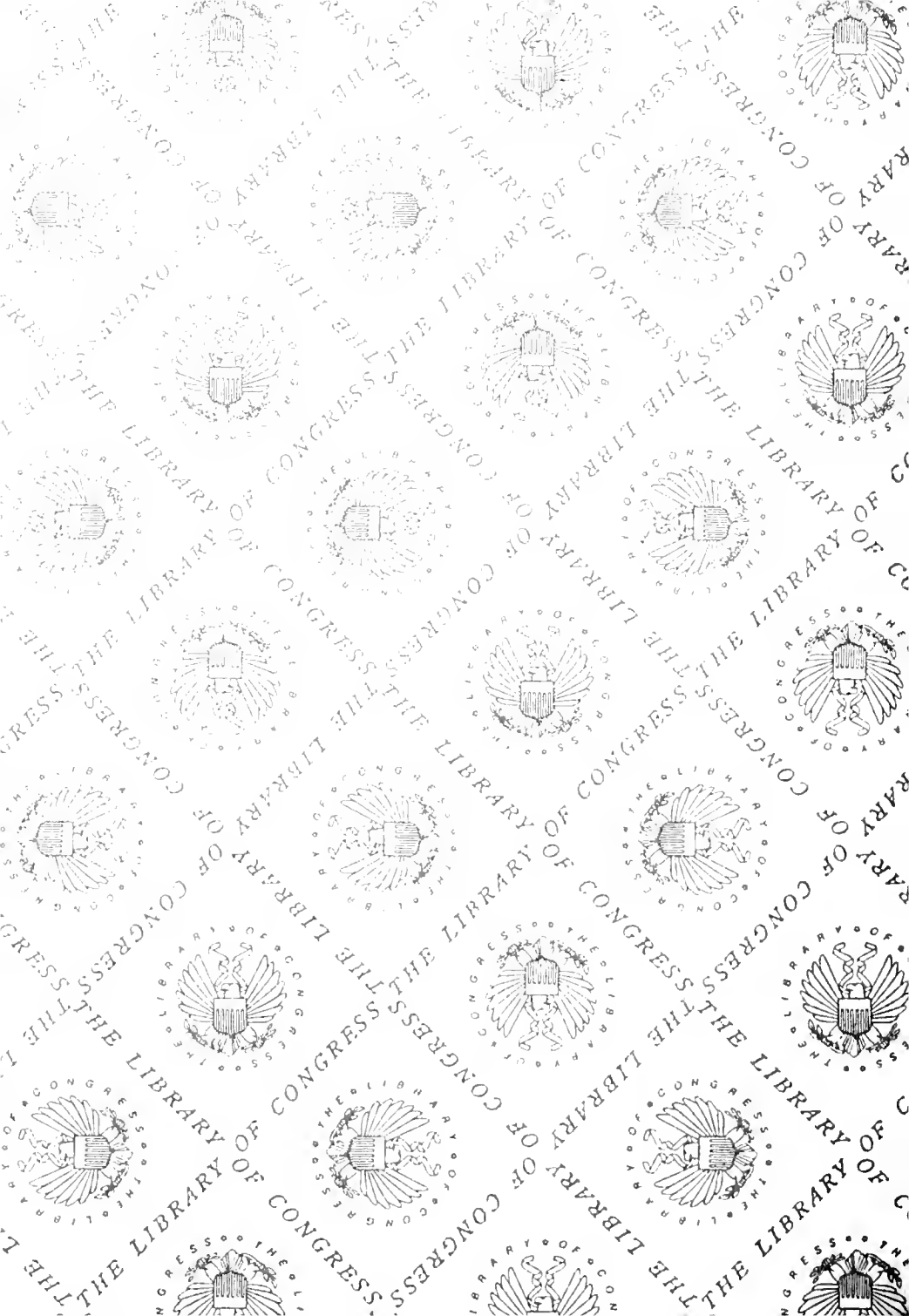
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